

House Republican Press Release

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Legislature Approves Graduated License Bill



Legislation Sponsored By Rep. Bielawa

HARTFORD- On Wednesday, May 11, the State Senate approved legislation cosponsored by State Rep. Hank Bielawa, R-2nd, that places restrictions on sixteen and seventeen-year-old drivers.

House Bill 5446, An Act Concerning Additional Training And Restrictions For Drivers Under The Age Of Eighteen, now goes to Governor M. Jodi Rell for final approval.

The legislation modifies graduated license restrictions approved by the Legislature in 2003 and will take effect on October 1, 2005. Currently, a 16- or 17-year old learning to drive under a learner's permit must complete, among other things, at least eight hours of behind-the-wheel, on-the-road training before he qualifies for a driver's license. It increases the minimum amount of behind-the-wheel, on-the-road training a 16- or 17-year old must have before qualifying for licensure from eight to 20 hours.

HB 5446 also prohibits a 16- or 17-year old licensed driver from driving from 12: 00 a. m. through 5: 00 a. m. unless he is traveling because of his employment, school or religious activities, or medical necessity. It exempts a 16- or 17-year old licensee from the passenger and hour restrictions if he is an active member of a volunteer fire company or department, a volunteer ambulance service or company, or an emergency medical service organization and is responding to an emergency or carrying out his duties as a member.

In addition, a 16- or 17-year old licensed drivers will be allowed to transport during the first three months of licensure either (1) both his parents or legal guardian, regardless of age as long one is a licensed driver, or (2) one passenger only who must be either a licensed driving instructor or someone at least age 20 with an unsuspended driver's license for the four preceding years.

“Anything we can do to help young people mature as new drivers will benefit them in the long run,” said Rep. Bielawa. “This legislation brings Connecticut more in line with graduated license restrictions enacted in other states. I also have to compliment Representative Scribner for his hard work in bringing this bill forward through the legislative process.”